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Tyler Stewart | News and Tribune

Former Senator Evan Bayh takes a moment between interviews while seated in the dining room of Brooklyn & the Butcher in downtown New Albany during a downtown visit.



Owner Ian Hall discusses the growth of his two New Albany restaurants, The Exchange and Brooklyn & the Butcher, with former Senator Evan Bayh and Beverage Director Brian Keeler in the dining room of Brooklyn & the Butcher.



Evan Bayh, right, talks with Sue Secondino, who now owns the home Evan was raised in, during a visit from Evan and his son Beau, left, while they were in Shirkieville, on May 26.

Bayh reflects on return to the fray

Former senator looks to take back his old seat

**By Rob Burgess
Kokomo Tribune**

If there is such a thing as political dynasty in Indiana, the Bayhs are certainly it. For four generations, this family has been in the spotlight.

It all began with Birch Bayh Sr., who served as head basketball coach for Indiana State University from 1918 to 1923. Then, his son, Birch Bayh Jr. was elected as U.S. senator from Indiana in 1963, a seat he held until 1980 when he was defeated by future vice president Dan Quayle. Along the way, he was a Democratic candidate for president in 1976 and authored Title IX and what later became the 25th and 26th amendments to the Constitution.

Which brings us to his son, Evan Bayh.

"I'm very pleased to have many of to have been kind enough to mention my father," said Evan Bayh during his speech at a Sept. 4 Labor Day rally at United Auto Workers Local 685 Union Hall at 929 East Hoffer St. "He's doing great. He's 88 years young, believe it or not, and still going strong. Our [twin sons Nick and Beau] are doing great, they're taller than me, they're smarter than me, and that's because of my wife, Susan."

After serving two years as Indiana's secretary of state, Evan Bayh was elected as governor in 1988. He served two terms as the state's chief executive before taking on his father's old job as senator in 1998. He held this position for a dozen years, before announcing his intention to not seek reelection in 2010.

"For some time, I have had a growing conviction that Congress is not operating as it should," he said during a televised press conference Feb. 15, 2010. "There is much too much partisanship and not enough progress. Too

much narrow ideology and not enough practical problem solving.” With that, he left public office for a position at Washington, D.C. law firm McGuireWoods.

Fast forward to 2016. Reversing course, Bayh entered the race for his old seat as something of a late-comer. He returned to the fold in July after previous Democratic candidate for senate, Baron Hill, dropped out of the running to replace retiring Republican Sen. Dan Coats. Bayh will face Republican candidate Rep. Todd Young in November.

So, why get back into the mix this time around?

“Well, a couple of things,” he said during an exclusive interview after the rally. “First, my sons were just starting their high school years at that point. And, I really wanted to try to spend some quality time with them while they were still at home. And, they’re out of the house now, so that’s no longer a factor.”

Besides the familial concerns, Bayh said he now saw the ever-increasing partisanship he cited in 2010 as an enticement to serve, not a deterrent.

“It is worse today than it was then, and that deeply troubles me,” he said. “I don’t think we can keep going on like this with Washington being as dysfunctional as it has been — getting really not much done — without it harming the future of our state and country. I feel compelled to try and do

something about it. I'm not naive. I don't think it will be easy. I don't think it will be quick. But, I think I have to try."

HOPING FOR SPLIT-TICKET VOTING

On the national level, it seems a pretty safe bet Indiana will burn bright red for Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump. Political polling analysis website FiveThirtyEight has Trump's chances of capturing Indiana's 11 Electoral College votes Nov. 8 at around 95 percent. For Bayh this means any hope of victory rests on Republican voters in the state crossing party lines to vote a split ticket. Bayh said he had experience bridging this gap in previous elections.

"Fortunately, Hoosiers have always been independent and intelligent," he said. "And I think they look at each race and the candidates who are running and they pick who they think is best. I've run in a couple years where the presidential race is not even close, and I was fortunate to be successful. I think people will vote for the individuals. I think that's the best approach."

Without mentioning Trump by name, Bayh used his speech to attack those who would seek to split the electorate through fear and hate.

"I've had a belly full of politicians who run for office who try and divide us one group from another," he told the crowd. "That try to divide the young from the old. Black against white. Hispanics against others. Different

religions. Different orientations. Different ethnicities. Divide. Divide. Divide."

Bayh listed the organizations — including the Senate Leadership Fund, Indiana and U.S. Chambers of Commerce (which Bayh actually worked for after leaving office) and Charles and David Koch's Freedom Partners Action Fund — which had been pouring millions of advertising dollars into attacking his candidacy. Bayh said he was sick of politicians denigrating their opponents instead of fighting for causes they believed in.

"They don't tell us what they're for," he said to cheers. "They tell us why other people are wrong. They want to run down their opponent and say, 'Vote for me. Why? Not because of what I stand for. Vote for me because my opponent is no good.' Well, that's not leadership and it's deeply un-American."

Bayh then invoked the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. who once said: "We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now."

"I'm here today because with your help and God willing we will lift our state up and we will move forward and create a better future for our loved ones, our children and our grandchildren, our working men and women," said Bayh. "That's what this election is all about. Not the forces of darkness and the big corporate money that wants to pile in here and tell us why we're no good or divide us one from the other."

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

One of the causes Bayh has highlighted since returning to politics is health care reform. During his time in the Senate, Bayh voted for the Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as Obamacare. Bayh said it's a stand he takes pride in based on his own personal experience.

"Let's not go back to the old days when insurance companies could take your insurance away from you because you've been sick," he said. "That's not right. My wife is with me here today. A year ago July, we found out she had a brain tumor. She had to have major brain surgery. Now, she's OK. She's 100 percent. But, the bill we got from the hospital and the doctors was \$90,000. Now, we've got good insurance. We're going to be OK. But, if you didn't have insurance in our state, and you get a bill for \$90,000, they take your home. They take your life savings. They take your car."

Susan Bayh has served on the boards of pharmaceutical companies Esperion Therapeutics, Novavax, Cubist Pharmaceuticals, MDRNA (formerly Nastech), and Dyax Corporation, according to her official biography on the Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs website. She was also a director of Wellpoint (formerly Anthem) from 2001 until 2013.

This is significant as the ACA has faced challenges of late from large insurance companies.

"Health insurer Aetna will stop selling individual Obamacare plans next year in 11 of the 15 states where it had been participating in the program, joining other major insurers that have pulled out of the government-run markets in the face of mounting losses," reported Bloomberg's Zachary Tracer Aug. 15. "Aetna's about-face on the ACA comes less than a month after the U.S. Justice Department sued to block the company's plan to purchase Humana. The Department of Justice said the combination would harm competition for private Medicare plans and for ACA health plans. Aetna has said its revised stance on the ACA wasn't prompted by the suit."

After the rally, Bayh said he blamed the gridlock on Capitol Hill for the insurers' pullouts.

"I understand there's some provisions in the law that are supposed to allow the companies to participate in those exchanges without losing money," he said. "Congress is so dysfunctional they won't release the funds, and so these companies are left with that choice, so it's obviously not good for the health care market because people need more choices. We should have more competition. The law was designed to bring that about, but they won't release the money to make that happen."

SECURITY VS. PRIVACY

For years, Bayh has been a strong voice in favor of turning the heat up on the so-called War on Terror. Bayh was one of the co-sponsors of the Joint

Resolution to Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces Against Iraq, and was even thanked by President George W. Bush during his Oct. 2, 2002 Rose Garden address after its passage. In 2006, Bayh voted to re-authorize the Patriot Act, which was passed shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. Since then, former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden disclosed to journalists mass surveillance of all Americans. Patriot Act author Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner Jr., R-Wisconsin, even said Snowden's revelations were not what his bill intended.

"As the author of the Patriot Act, I am extremely troubled by the FBI's interpretation of this legislation," Sensenbrenner said in a June 6, 2013 statement.

Bayh said though it was a careful balancing act between privacy and security, he stood by his Patriot Act vote.

"We have suicidal terrorists trying to kill all of us, and that's the ultimate depriving of someone's civil liberties, to be killed by these fanatics," he said. "So, we need to let our FBI and law enforcement agencies have the tools they need to get the job done. At the same time, obviously we have to sensitive to people's privacy concerns, and that gets to be pretty technical. But, I don't think we should have to choose one or the other. I will say this: I think a healthy skepticism about the government is appropriate and we don't want them intruding unduly into our privacy, but frankly I think

equating fear of our government with fear of ISIS and that sort of thing, I just don't think those two are equal."

RESIDENCY QUESTIONS

As another former Indiana Sen. Richard Lugar faced in 2012, Bayh is being pelted with attacks by his opponent over whether or not he is actually a resident of the state he looks to once again represent.

"A CNN review of public records since Bayh left office in 2011 shows the Democrat repeatedly listed his two multi-million dollar homes in Washington as his main places of residence — not the \$53,000 condo he owns in Indianapolis," reported Manu Raju Aug. 21. "Just three weeks after leaving office in 2011, Bayh changed his address to his \$2.3 million home in a leafy neighborhood in Washington, according to Indiana records. And often when Bayh registered his address — whether it was on an Alaska fishing license, a donation to Hillary Clinton or on the deed to his beachfront property in Southern Florida — he listed Washington as his home."

Bayh disputes these charges as frivolous.

"I'm 60 years old and there's not a day of my life I haven't been a Hoosier," he said. "We voted here in every election, despite what these commercials imply. It's just true. And, we own property in the state. As a matter of fact, our homestead deduction has always been in the state of Indiana. Our

children were born here. We've lived here for 31 years after we got married."

Bayh ended by asking if this was really the most important issue to Young and his supporters.

"I don't think it's the most important issue to the people of Indiana," he said. "And, I think that that just shows they think only way they can win this campaign is by being negative toward me rather than standing for something positive. I think the voters really want people who are going to try and help them, not just run their opponent down."

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